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NEWS RELEASE

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Wallace Foundation Grants Education Department \$600,000 to Support School Leadership

The R.I. Department of Elementary and Secondary Education has received a \$600,000 three-year grant from The Wallace Foundation to develop and support school leadership and to offer education and training for school leaders throughout their careers.

The grant will finance the second phase of the department's ongoing State Action for Education Leadership Project (SAELP), which The Wallace Foundation has supported for the past three years.

"I'm extremely pleased that Rhode Island has once again been awarded a grant to support our state's educational leadership efforts," Governor Donald L. Carcieri said. "I want to thank the Wallace Foundation for recognizing Rhode Island's efforts to improve school leadership.

"School leaders play a powerful role in teaching quality and student learning," Governor Carcieri continued. "Experienced, effective principals are especially critical in our state's lowest-performing schools. Last year, I proposed the creation of a new principal-mentoring program designed to ensure that all our schools have top-quality leaders. My administration will continue working to improve the quality of education for all Rhode Island students by bolstering the efforts of our state's dedicated principals."

"This generous grant from The Wallace Foundation will enable us to continue to develop education, training, and support systems for school-board members, superintendents, principals, and teachers," said Peter McWalters, R.I. Commissioner of Elementary and Secondary Education. "Effective leadership is essential as we focus our efforts on improving student achievement."

The overall mission of SAELP is "to create leadership policy structures [that] support school reform and improved student achievement." The goals include increasing and diversifying the candidate pool for school and district leadership, improving professional-development programs, promoting better licensing and certification processes for leaders, and improving contracting, bargaining, compensation, and performance-review processes for school leaders.

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During its first phase, SAELP developed prototypes for leadership initiatives, began collaborations on leadership issues among various districts and higher-education institutions, adopted approval standards for principal-preparation programs, and drafted legislation that would require standards training and resources for school administrators.

The Wallace grant also enabled the Providence School District to receive its own Wallace Foundation Grant for leadership. In addition, demonstration sites were established in other school districts: Bristol-Warren, Cranston, Newport, North Kingstown, Pawtucket, West Warwick, and Woonsocket.

The second phase of the project will entail such work as developing policies to require districts to provide comprehensive leadership education and training and forming leadership partnerships throughout the state. A request for proposals for developing new demonstration sites for this second phase of the project has been distributed.

The grant will be for \$275,000 during the first year, renewable for two more years up to a total of \$600,000.

